

SENATE BILL 2063
By Graves

AN ACT to name the bridge spanning the Gallatin By-Pass on State Route 386 in Sumner County in honor of the late Corporal Patrick R. Nixon, United States Marine Corps.

WHEREAS, from time to time, the members of this General Assembly have seen fit to name certain highways and bridges to honor the memory of those courageous members of the United States Armed Forces who gave their lives in the defense of our nation; and

WHEREAS, no person is more deserving of this honor than the late Corporal Patrick R. Nixon, United States Marine Corps, who was the first Tennessean killed in combat in Iraq; and

WHEREAS, a 2000 graduate of Overton High School, Patrick Nixon was the son of David and Debra Nixon of Gallatin; and

WHEREAS, following the patriotic tradition of a great-grandfather, a grandfather, his father, and both brothers, Patrick had determined early in life to join the military; and

WHEREAS, Patrick enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps after graduating from high school and went to Parris Island, South Carolina for basic training; he served in Okinawa and at Camp Lejeune, receiving promotions, first to Lance Corporal and then to Corporal, before being deployed to Iraq as part of Operation Enduring Freedom; and

WHEREAS, on March 23, 2003, Corporal Nixon was part of a unit that was ambushed while trying to secure a bridge at Nasiriyah, Iraq; one of eight Marines declared missing, he was confirmed dead on March 30, 2003, and was subsequently interred at Arlington National Cemetery; and

WHEREAS, a beloved son, brother, and uncle within his extended family, Patrick Nixon had wanted to serve as a history teacher in addition to his military career, and to eventually acquire a farm and raise horses; like thousands of others of this nation's sons and daughters,

he did not shrink from serving in combat, believing in the justice of the cause to protect our national security and liberty and to free the Iraqi people; and

WHEREAS, Corporal Patrick Nixon served with great courage and gallantry, giving his life for his country and for the cause in which he believed, and for that ultimate sacrifice, he deserves proper recognition; as a member of the United States Marine Corps, he proudly continued an essential tradition of American society: the concept of the citizen-soldier; and

WHEREAS, Corporal Nixon's dedication to excellence in the military and his love of his family, his fellow soldiers and his country, as exemplified in his sacrifice of life itself in defense of all that he held dear, stand as enduring examples of all the characteristics that have ensured the continued freedom of our nation and the preservation of its ideals over the course of our history; and

WHEREAS, the Sumner County Board of Commissioners has petitioned this Body to name a certain bridge on State Route 386 to honor the bountiful life of this exceptional young man, and this General Assembly most heartily concurs with this excellent proposal to permanently commemorate the singular patriotism, courage and commitment to duty of the late Corporal Patrick R. Nixon, United States Marine Corps; now, therefore,

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the bridge spanning the Gallatin By-Pass on State Route 386 in Sumner County is hereby designated as the "Corporal Patrick R. Nixon Memorial Bridge" in recognition of the life of valor and death in combat of Corporal Patrick R. Nixon, United States Marine Corps, the first Tennessean killed in combat in Iraq.

SECTION 2. The Department of Transportation is directed to erect suitable signs or to affix suitable markers designating the bridge spanning the Gallatin By-Pass on State Route 386 in Sumner County as the "Corporal Patrick R. Nixon Memorial Bridge. The cost of such signage shall be funded in accordance with Tennessee Code Annotated, §54-1-133.

SECTION 3. The erection of such signs shall be within the guidelines prescribed by the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices*.

SECTION 4. This act shall become operative only if the federal highway administrator advises the commissioner of transportation in writing that the provisions of this act shall not render Tennessee in violation of federal laws and regulations and subject to penalties prescribed therein.

SECTION 5. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it